

VZCZCXYZ0000
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBU #0519/01 0752227
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 162227Z MAR 07
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7561
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION IMMEDIATE 6018
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING IMMEDIATE 0131
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA IMMEDIATE 5873
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ MAR 4511
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA IMMEDIATE 1987
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID IMMEDIATE 1796
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO IMMEDIATE 0259
RUEHDG/AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO IMMEDIATE 0242
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL IMMEDIATE 0066

UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 000519

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

G/TIP FOR BARBARA FLECK
WHA/PPC FOR MIKE PUCSETTI
WHA/BSC FOR DREW BLAKENEY
INL FOR JAMES HIDES
DRL FOR CATHERINE NEWLING
PRM FOR MONIQUE RAMGOOLIE
G/IWI
DEPT PLS PASS TO USAID

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [KCRM](#) [PHUM](#) [KWMN](#) [SMIG](#) [KFRD](#) [ASEC](#) [PREF](#) [PGOV](#) [ELAB](#)
PREL, AR
SUBJECT: ARGENTINA SUBMISSION FOR THE SEVENTH ANNUAL
TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT

REF: 2006 STATE 202745

11. (SBU) Summary: Argentina is a country of origin, transit and destination for internationally trafficked men, women and children. Trafficking in persons (TIP) in Argentina primarily involves Argentines trafficked internally for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation, mostly from the northern provinces to the central provinces and Buenos Aires, and from Buenos Aires to several southern provinces. Trafficking of persons for commercial sexual exploitation also occurs across the country's borders, principally women and minors from Paraguay, Brazil, and to a lesser extent the Dominican Republic. International trafficking into Argentina of Bolivians and Chinese for forced labor was also reported. Argentina is also a transit country for international trafficking of women to the Southern Cone region and Europe, particularly Spain, Chile, and Brazil. Lack of federal anti-TIP legislation hampers and complicates investigations and prosecutions of traffickers, as does the existence of official corruption at local levels. Comprehensive and reliable data on the magnitude of TIP in Argentina as well as the number of possible victims, arrests, and prosecutions do not exist.

12. (SBU) The U.S. State Department has provided funding to the International Office for Migration (IOM) for TIP training and victims assistance programs and the Secretary of State recognized an Argentine woman active in anti-TIP efforts with an International Woman of Courage Award. The GOA, with IOM's assistance, increased TIP training for judges, prosecutors, security officials and other government officials. Although there has not been significant improvement in the GOA's efforts to combat TIP, public, media and GOA interest in addressing the issue has increased significantly, with two draft anti-TIP bills pending in the Argentine Congress and a new anti-TIP publicity campaign launched in March. Passage of anti-TIP legislation defining TIP a federal crime would be the first step towards improving the GOA's ability to investigate and prosecute individuals involved in human

trafficking. Despite limited resources, the GOA, with significant help from IOM, continues to provide assistance to trafficking victims through the Attorney General's Office of Victims Assistance (OFAVI). Government officials and NGOs who are working to combat TIP are well-meaning individuals; but their efforts go largely uncoordinated. Post recommends that Argentina maintain its Tier II watchlist designation. End Summary.

13. (SBU) Overview:

-- A. Is the country a country of origin, transit, or destination for internationally trafficked men, women, or children? Provide, where possible, numbers or estimates for each group; how they were trafficked, to where, and for what purpose. Does the trafficking occur within the country's borders? Does it occur in territory outside of the government's control (e.g. in a civil war situation)? Are any estimates or reliable numbers available as to the extent or magnitude of the problem? What is (are) the source(s) of available information on trafficking in persons or what plans are in place (if any) to undertake documentation of trafficking? How reliable are the numbers and these sources? Are certain groups of persons more at risk of being trafficked (e.g. women and children, boys versus girls, certain ethnic groups, refugees, etc.)?

Response: Based on post interviews with government officials, NGOs, the IOM, and the Catholic Church, as well as written responses to the Department's TIP questionnaire from NGOs and think tanks, Argentina is a country of origin, transit and destination for internally and internationally trafficked men, women and children. Argentina's main problem is internal trafficking for the purposes of sexual commercial exploitation, mostly from the northern provinces to the central provinces and Buenos Aires, and from Buenos Aires to several southern provinces. Argentina is also a destination country for women and young girls trafficked into Argentina for the sex trade primarily from Paraguay, although victims from the Dominican Republic, Colombia and Brazil have also been identified. Argentina is also a country of origin and transit for internationally trafficked women and girls whose final destination is the sex trade in Spain, Chile and Brazil. According to the MFA, the Spanish Civil Guard reported that it assisted 182 Argentine female trafficking victims in 2005. In addition, the IOM reports that 27 of the 99 victims of sexual exploitation reported in Chile from 1998-2006 were Argentine.

Argentina is a destination country for men, women and children trafficked for the purposes of labor exploitation. According to a 2006 report from the Anti-Slavery International, although Bolivians are primarily affected, Paraguayans, Argentines and Peruvians are also reported to be at risk of this type of exploitation, particularly in factories producing footwear and farms. The report also states that there are similar concerns raised about working conditions for Korean and Chinese migrants in factories and agricultures. Based on post interviews with the Argentine immigration officials, there is also anecdotal evidence to suggest that an increasing number of Chinese are being trafficked into Argentina's tri-border area to supply labor for Chinese-owned supermarket chains under exploitative conditions. However, there has not been any comprehensive study or official investigation into the matter of which the Embassy is aware.

The Ombudsman's office estimates that tens of thousands of people could be working in similar conditions in sweatshops in and around Buenos Aires.

The Northern provinces of Argentina are also recognized as a point of origin and transit for internationally trafficked babies and children who are illegally adopted by families from Europe and the United States, though the scope of the problem is very hard to measure. Based on testimonies from those arrested for this crime cited by Anti-Slavery International, a child can be sold for USD 1,500-5000, with

the child often going abroad.

The MFA has also identified as a problem the trafficking of Bosnians and other citizens of Eastern Europe for the purposes of begging or selling goods on the streets.

Please see section 3B for more information on how victims are trafficked.

Since Argentina does not have a comprehensive law criminalizing TIP, reliable estimates for the number of victims trafficked to, from, and within Argentina are not available. There are several bills pending in the Argentine Congress that would, for the first time, define trafficking in persons as a federal crime. In the absence of such a law, traffickers are prosecuted under other elements of the criminal code and, therefore, are not reported by the various law enforcement services or judicial sector for trafficking violations per se, making data collection difficult. In addition, victims are often too afraid or ashamed to seek legal redress. Partial and incomplete information comes from provincial judicial data, a number of emergency social services hotlines, from various provincial social service-related agencies, NGO's, the media, and from international agencies.

A network of NGO's "No a la Trata" (No to Trafficking) has attempted to track the number of trafficking cases in the country over the past few years, mainly through monitoring

press reports and cataloging reports from its member groups. Unfortunately, the information is often incomplete and does not differentiate sufficiently between sexual abuse of minors, sexual violence and exploitation of minors for commercial sexual exploitation. Their information, however, shows reports of likely trafficking in many of Argentina's provinces, with a concentration in the northern provinces, and in the province and city of Buenos Aires.

The think tank, the Center for the Implementation of Public Policies that Foster Equality and Growth (CIPPECC), has also begun to develop a database that tracks TIP cases.

The groups that have the highest risk of becoming trafficking victims are women and children with low levels of education from impoverished families and broken homes, subject to physical and/or sexual abuse in the home and often abandoned or essentially left to fend for themselves.

1B. Please provide a general overview of the trafficking situation in the country and any changes since the last TIP Report (e.g. changes in direction). Also briefly explain the political will to address trafficking in persons. Other items to address may include: What kind of conditions are the victims trafficked into? Which populations are targeted by the traffickers? Who are the traffickers? What methods are used to approach victims? (Are they offered lucrative jobs, sold by their families, approached by friends of friends, etc.?) What methods are used to move the victims (e.g., are false documents being used?).

Response: Internal trafficking for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation remains Argentina's biggest problem, with trafficking cases reported in many parts of the country. The corruption of security forces and government officials often allows traffickers to act with impunity. Since the last TIP report, the GoA has increased efforts to provide TIP-related training to security forces, community groups, prosecutors and judges. The Secretary of Human Rights of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights (La Secretaria de Derechos Humanos del Ministerio de Justicia y

SIPDIS

Derechos Humanos) sponsored a series of training courses throughout the country, in cooperation with local organizations. The Attorney General's Office of Victim's Assistance (OFAVI) also worked together with the Secretary of Homeland Security (Secretaria de Seguridad Interior) to offer

training programs to security forces.

The GOA has identified trafficking in persons as a serious problem and an increasing number of government agencies at both the national and provincial levels are becoming more engaged in trying to address the problem. The GoA has demonstrated the political will to bring its criminal code up to international standards and has likewise demonstrated its intentions to prevent and punish trafficking offenses. OFAVI, the GOA's anti-TIP focal point, introduced a draft bill to criminalize TIP, which was approved by the Argentine Senate in August 2005. Since then, five new draft bills have been introduced to criminalize human trafficking. See Section 4A for more information about the current status of anti-TIP legislation in the Argentine Congress.

There has been greater public awareness of the TIP problem in Argentina and the GOA has made increased progress on strengthening its assistance and prevention efforts and in providing TIP-related training to judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement officials, often in conjunction with IOM. As noted in last year's report, a Special Prosecutors Office for crimes against sexual integrity, child prostitution and trafficking in persons was created in 2005. It is still too early to evaluate the office's impact.

The conditions into which victims of sexual exploitation are trafficked vary significantly according to all available reports. Victims generally receive medical attention within the brothel or place of exploitation if they have medical needs. In most cases of sexual exploitation, protection is used during sexual contact. Consumption of alcohol and drugs is generally encouraged and sometimes forced upon victims. Physical coercion is common; in isolated cases, severe acts of violence are used to control victims.

IOM reports that conditions faced by victims of labor exploitation are generally very poor. Many of them are forced to eat and sleep in the same cramped spaces where they work. Citing a study conducted by the University of Buenos Aires, IOM notes that an estimated 77 percent of trafficked laborers do not have appropriate documentation, which limits their access to social services and allows their exploiters to control and manipulate them more easily.

According to various NGOs, traffickers target young women from the northern provinces of Argentina since different waves of European immigrants settled in the region and intermarried with the local people resulting in a very attractive physiognomy that is desirable for traffickers in women for commercial sexual exploitation and children for illegal adoptions. Traffickers also target young mothers so that they can intimidate woman into submission by threatening to harm their children. For the purposes of forced labor, traffickers target the poor in rural communities in Argentina as well as Bolivians and Paraguayans.

IOM, CIPPECC, the media, and others have identified trafficking networks within Argentina of various sizes. They have identified in particular, rive large organized crime networks dedicated to the trafficking of victims for sexual exploitation have been identified throughout the country. These trafficking networks sometimes consist of entire extended families plus their business associates that include recruiters, pimps, and managers of brothels. Secondary operators include security forces and public servants who provide protection to traffickers, employees of bus and taxi companies who assist traffickers by transporting victims, employees of cell phone companies that provide traffickers with secure phone lines, individuals who create false documents for minors and foreigners, and hotels who facilitate access to sex tourists. Within the country, victims of sexual exploitation are frequently moved from one brothel to the next along predetermined routes, often to avoid the law, with brothel managers "renting out" victims to pimps for a period of a few weeks.

According to Red Alto a la Trata y Trafico (the Stop Trafficking and Smuggling Network), trafficking networks related to labor exploitation are generally less sophisticated. In the case of internal trafficking, labor recruiters visit poor rural communities to recruit Argentine workers to work on farms, particularly citrus and blueberry farms. Workers are then subject to exploitative living and working conditions. Similarly, in the case of international trafficking, Bolivian nationals frequently travel back to Bolivia to recruit their countrymen and provide them with documentation for the trip to Argentina. Border controls are generally very weak, making it fairly easy to transport victims, including minors, into Argentina from neighboring countries. Most trafficking victims of Bolivian origin are employed in Argentina's agricultural and textile industries by other Bolivians, Argentines, and Koreans, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

IOM explains that traffickers generally use fraud to recruit victims of sexual exploitation. Some recruiters work directly for trafficking networks, working on commission, earning between 35 USD and 165 USD per victim. They typically deceive women and girls from low income families by promising them work as domestic employees, nannies, waitresses, or cooks. Traffickers also recruit girls from lower and middle income families by advertising auditions in local hotels and promising jobs as models or actresses. Young women, especially minors, often become trafficking victims through romantic relationships with pimps. Pairs of male and female recruiters sometimes pose as married couples, occasionally with children, to win the confidence of girls and their families.

IOM notes that traffickers have also used more violent methods to capture their victims, albeit to a lesser extent. The local press has reported numerous cases of victims being kidnapped by traffickers have been identified, particularly in the Northwest region of Argentina. Kidnappings of victims are generally well-planned. Traffickers rely on local taxi drivers, traveling salesmen, or neighbors to target women that meet the requirements of trafficking networks. These third party actors are paid approximately 17 USD (50 Argentine pesos) per victim that they identify. In some cases, recru